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Washington Roundup

Soviet Spacecraft

Top-level U. S. officials, who in the past have tended to cast a critical eye on directed energy weapons—especially the possibility that the USSR could successfully develop and test in orbit a space-based high energy chemical laser—suddenly have softened their positions. One reason for the rapid reversal is that **concern is setting in at senior levels of the Reagan Administration over hard information on three new Soviet spacecraft**, one of which appears to be, according to U. S. officials, a laser weapon packaged for space tests. Such tests could be carried out within weeks, or it could take months, depending on the boosters used to place this large spacecraft in orbit. Analysts believe the early beam propagation of a chemical laser would be for antisatellite applications but do not rule out other tests. The other new Soviet spacecraft appear to be for reconnaissance use. The U. S. recently demonstrated the capability of reconnaissance satellites to operate against objects in space when it **manuevered the KH-11 spacecraft into position to examine the tiles damaged in launching the NASA space shuttle**. The quality of those images convinced NASA and the White House that the damaged shuttle tiles would not interfere with reentry, enabling completion of the orbital phase of the shuttle's mission.

Agreement between the U. S. and Saudi Arabia to assure protection of secret equipment and prevent the five Boeing E-3A airborne warning and control aircraft from becoming a threat to Israel has been sent to Congress by Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig. **The agreement includes a firm Saudi agreement to share information with the U. S.**, special measures to provide for security of secret equipment, transfer of data or equipment to other nations only with U. S. approval, use of the aircraft on defensive missions within Saudi airspace and an assured American presence in Saudi Arabia into the 1990s. President Reagan last week sent the \$5.8 billion Saudi arms package to Congress and said he believes it has a "good chance" to get Senate approval.

NASA Budget Cut

National Aeronautics and Space Administration must cut an additional \$357 million in Fiscal 1982 under President Ronald Reagan's newest round of budget reductions, but it amounts to only a 6% cut while the rest of the government was given a 12% cut. The details on effects on individual NASA programs were sent to the White House Office of Management and Budget last week. **A likely candidate to be cut or postponed is the Centaur booster, needed for the Galileo Jupiter orbiter probe.** Last week NASA granted a 30-day extension for the Centaur project pending a NASA study for the Air Force on the need for Centaur. The Air Force previously has testified in Congress that it does not need Centaur. **Despite the cuts, NASA will still have a 5% gain in funding when compared with Fiscal 1981.** In Fiscal 1983, NASA will receive \$1 billion less than it had hoped for, but only \$200-300 million less than the original Reagan Administration budget cut in March. The Fiscal 1984 budget cut will be under \$300 million. One area for NASA cuts is research, which the Administration feels can be done better by industry. The shuttle now commands 55% of the NASA budget, but the Apollo moon landing project required 65-70% of the NASA budget at its most active period.

Airline Data

Signs are that airlines no longer will permit free access to hard statistical data on the value of a particular airline route. Competitors have been able to determine lucrative flights by tapping into service segment data required by the Civil Aeronautics Board to be filed monthly by major airlines. As quickly as one month after the data reports, competitors can determine traffic volume, load factor and cargo by flight. The result has been that **newcomer carriers whose filing requirements are less burdensome and revealing can home in on the choicest segments in the system.** American Airlines filed with the CAB to protect its cargo information, and USAir, concerned that People Express is moving in on its best markets, filed the data with the Board but required the CAB under its rules of procedures to protect it from disclosure until the Board makes a final judgment on data access.

PATCO Moves

Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization is asking the Justice Dept. to file charges against President Reagan and Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis for using military air traffic controllers and for giving controllers 48 hr. to return to work. Justice Dept. officials have taken the proposal under advisement, **but privately admit there is little likelihood the Administration will prosecute itself.** PATCO threatens to go to a federal grand jury itself if no action is forthcoming.

—Washington Staff

Soviet Union Defensive Buildup

Extensive report of Soviet military might includes details of weapons systems and research efforts, location of facilities

By Clarence A. Robinson, Jr.

Washington—Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger provided details of a massive buildup of military forces by the Soviet Union last week including characteristics of individual Soviet weapons systems, the location of production facilities, and large-scale research and development efforts.

In uncharacteristic candor, the Pentagon presented a 99-page report on Soviet military power that took almost four months to prepare, and which set off wrangling within the U.S. intelligence community over release of some of the information.

The information Weinberger made available last week generally came out of a secret briefing presented earlier this year to the defense ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries.

In Weinberger's detailed account of the Soviet threat to the Western alliance, he described as unrelenting and unending the flow of new Soviet weapons—tanks, missiles, ships, aircraft, artillery—and used

the occasion to signal the start of a two-pronged information effort in the U.S. and Europe to try to overcome a Soviet campaign aimed at halting the basing of new U.S. theater nuclear forces in alliance nations.

"The Soviet defense budget continues to grow to fund this force buildup, to fund the projection of Soviet power far from Soviet shores and to fund Soviet proxy forces to support revolutionary factions and conflict in increasing threats to international stability," Weinberger said.

He described the military buildup in what he termed as stark facts, which include:

- Soviet and Warsaw Pact tactical bombers and fighter aircraft located in Eastern Europe number more than 3,500. In each of the last eight years, the Soviet Union has produced more than 1,000 fighter aircraft.

- Soviet military helicopters number over 5,200, including numbers of Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopter gunships used in direct support of ground forces.

- Soviet SS-20 intermediate range ballistic missiles deployed against Western Europe, China, and Japan—over 250 are in the field, with each missile equipped with three independently targetable nuclear warheads. Each of the SS-20 launchers also is equipped with a reload missile.

- Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) modernization—1,398 ICBM launchers and 950 submarine launchers provide 7,000 nuclear warheads in the strategic arsenal including 156 long-range bomber platforms. This number does not include 150 nuclear-weapons-capable Backfire bombers.

- Construction of eight new classes of submarines and eight classes of large surface warships.

- Deployment of 10,000 surface-to-air missiles at 1,000 fixed sites across the Soviet Union.

- Fielding of 50,000 tanks and 20,000 artillery pieces, including T-64 and T-72 tanks with improved armor, heavy mobile artillery, multiple rocket launchers, and self-propelled armored 122-mm. and 152-mm. guns.

The Soviet air force is separated into three distinct air arms that include Long-Range Aviation, Frontal Aviation or tactical aviation and Transport Aviation.

Frontal Aviation is the largest com-

ponent in the Soviet air force and is organized into tactical air armies consisting generally of fighter, fighter-bomber, transport, helicopter and reconnaissance units. The tactical air armies are located in 12 Soviet military districts and with groups of Soviet forces in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. These tactical air armies account for approximately 4,800 fixed-wing aircraft, 250 transports, and 3,500 helicopters, according to the Pentagon's report.

Over the past five or six years the Soviets have introduced modern aircraft such as the Sukhoi Su-24 Fencer, the first modern aircraft designed specifically for a ground attack role and the first to carry a weapons system officer as a crewmember. There are 400 Fencers operational.

The Fencer has a maximum payload of 8,000 kg. (17,640 lb.), a combat radius of 1,800 km. (1,119 mi.) and a service ceiling of 17,500 meters (57,418 ft.). The Su-24 provides the capability for Frontal Aviation units to strike targets throughout NATO from home bases in the USSR. The addition of this aircraft, along with the latest attack versions of the Mikoyan MiG-23 Flogger, and Sukhoi Su-17 Fitter

NATO Suggestion

Brussels—Decision by the U.S. to make public secret documents concerning Soviet military enhancements was largely due to the urging of members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, according to U.S. NATO officials.

An official said that the Defense Dept. assessment of Soviet military strength and capability that was outlined last week by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger at a special news conference in Washington was originally presented to European defense ministers in March, who told the U.S. at that time to make public the secret material.

The same information was used to brief French President Francois Mitterrand after his election victory in May, the official said.

Much of the original secret information was contained in the 99-page illustrated document that was made public simultaneously in Washington and Brussels last week.

The document had been presented to members of NATO's national delegations before being released at a news conference held at NATO headquarters.

In a satellite linkup with Washington, Weinberger's remarks to the press conference on current Soviet military strength were telecast live to the NATO conference.

Soviet Mikoyan MiG-23 Flogger B all-weather counterair fighter is shown armed with air-to-air missiles for intercept missions. The large missiles